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Title

The transformative impact of unarmed civilian peacekeeping

Introduction

Militarism is an ideology that explains why the military are embedded as a 'normal' component of society. Peacekeeping is an area in which the military argue that they are essential beyond 'defence of the state', thus contributing to the position of the military as necessary, and normal, in responding to violence in society. However, the concept and evidence of unarmed civilian peacekeeping or protection (UCP) demonstrates that 'peacekeeping' can be demilitarised because UCP provides options for peacekeeping to be either nonviolent or armed, thus challenging the normalised view of the military being essential to peacekeeping and violence prevention.

UCP, as a nonviolent method of peacekeeping, contributes to the under-developed area of study on using nonviolence to prevent violence and constrain the behaviour of armed actors. Along with other security and peace strategies that use nonviolence, such as peacebuilding, peacemaking, and conflict resolution, nonviolent peacekeeping can positively contribute to the way we deal with, and prevent, violence internationally. Specifically, it enables organisations to provide unarmed protection from direct and immediate violence perpetrated by armed actors in conflicts without exacerbating cycles of violence. Francis¹ has argued that without using nonviolent approaches we cannot fully achieve peacebuilding and peaceful change in societies and therefore UCP becomes an essential component in designing responses to violence.

Nonviolent approaches are under-represented in security, protection and conflict management research, but growing evidence is showing that nonviolence can be effective in creating security, changing conflict dynamics and building sustainable peace². This paper argues that i) by conceptualising UCP as part of peacekeeping we provide new insights into the approaches and mechanisms for preventing violence, ii) by exploring its relationship with nonviolence theory we can present its transformative influence in both practice and theoretical developments.

UCP has been practiced, in its modern form, for over 35 years across the world³ and evidence presented in this paper demonstrates that this method can save lives, prevent displacement, and change the behavior of armed actors. In viewing UCP in the context of peacekeeping, it is important to note there are some limitations to all peacekeeping. Peacekeeping requires the parties to the conflict to agree to peacekeepers being present or a ceasefire, and peacekeeping depends on the development of relationships⁴. In this paper, in order to argue why UCP is important to include in any analysis of violence prevention methods, we need to consider that there are limitations to armed military peacekeeping, and therefore the desire for an alternative to the military reflects not just an ideological support for pacifism but also a pragmatic concern about what is necessary for sustainable peace.

¹ Diana Francis, "Making Peace Global" *Peace Review* Vol. 25, Issue 1 (2013), pp42-50

² Ibid; M. Wallace, *Security Without Weapons: Rethinking Violence, Nonviolent Action, and Civilian Protection*. (London: Routledge, 2017)

³ R. Julian, and C. Schweitzer, "The Origins and Development of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping." *Peace Review*. Vol. 27, Issue 1 (2015) pp 1- 8

⁴ Ellen Furnari, *Understanding effectiveness in peacekeeping operations: Exploring the perspectives of frontline peacekeepers* (Thesis Doctor of Philosophy), (Dunedin, NZ, University of Otago, 2014) , available: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10523/4765>> (accessed January 20th 2019)

What are the limitations of UN military peacekeeping?

Whilst UN military peacekeeping has claimed success in creating peace⁵, these claims are problematic because there has been no recognition of other peacekeeping approaches that it could be compared with⁶. In seeking to understand and improve peacekeeping, most academic researchers have not challenged the underlying assumption that violence/military is necessary for peacekeeping to work⁷. Drawing on concepts introduced in critical peace and conflict studies literature⁸, this paper identifies four limitations of using military personnel to undertake peacekeeping operations: the constraints of military training and thinking; the reinforcement of a cycle of violence and militarism; lack of capacity and skills for local engagement; and inadequate gender equality and leadership by women.

Being dominated by soldiers, peacekeeping design and implementation can be constrained by military thinking and training and by the use of weapons. The peacekeepers in UN Peacekeeping missions are all supplied by Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) who receive money for each person they supply. All those people will have been through a national military training programme instilling in them specific ways of thinking about what they do⁹. A national military training programme is primarily designed for national defence or 'force projection' overseas. The people training in the military are drilled to follow orders without question, focused on 'overcoming the enemy', taught how to handle a range of weapons, and trained in how to 'win'.¹⁰ This training does not equip them to see conflict as a complex situation, to realise that people can be both victims and perpetrators, or to build conflict resolution or relationship building skills. Peace and conflict studies, and peacebuilding projects, understand sites of armed conflict as places with many influences and a range of intervention opportunities, and as requiring a wide range of tools and approaches¹¹. The domination of the military in peacekeeping constrains the range of responses.

A primarily military response reinforces a cycle of violence and militarism: The representation of the military as important in peace work reinforces a view that the military are essential to resolving conflicts and tensions¹². However, peacebuilding activities and agencies have shown that the military are not necessary for peacebuilding and conflict resolution (an area now dominated by civilian agencies and actors). In this paper we show that UCP is demonstrating that the military are

⁵ UNDPKO "Reforming Peacekeeping." *UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations*. available: <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/reforming-peacekeeping>> (accessed November 14th 2018)

⁶ Catherine Goetze *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2017)

⁷ Examples of academic studies that have questioned the assumption that violence works include Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan, "Grassroots initiatives in unarmed peacekeeping." *Peace Review* Vol. 8. Issue 4 (1996) p569-p577; Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber, (eds) *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders. A Recurrent Vision*. (Honolulu: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, 2000); Lisa Schirch *Civilian Peacekeeping. Preventing Violence and Making Space for Democracy*. (Uppsala: Life and Peace 2006); Liam Mahony and Enrique Eguren *Unarmed Bodyguards. International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press 1997); C. Schweitzer. et al *Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study*. (Minneapolis: Nonviolent Peaceforce 2001): available: < <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/about-3/about-12/111-nonviolent-peaceforce-feasibility-study>> (accessed December 4th 2016); Oliver Kaplan, *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Wallace, op.cit.

⁸ For example, the pioneering work of Lederach and Curle: John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997); T. Woodhouse and J.P Lederach. *Adam Curle: Radical Peacemaker* (Stroud: Hawthorn Press, 2016)

⁹ S. Whitworth, *Men Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A gendered analysis*. (Boulder and London: Lynne Reiner, 2004).

¹⁰ C. Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004); Women Peacemaker Programme *Gender and Militarism Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace*. (The Hague: WPP, 2014)

¹¹ S. Fisher et al, *Working with Conflict*. (London and New York, Zed Books, 2000); J.P. Lederach, R. Neufeldt, H. Cutbertson, *Reflective Peacebuilding*. (Notre Dame: Kroc Institute, 2007).

¹² Enloe, op. cit.

not essential for peacekeeping either, and that nonviolent actors can protect civilians and reduce violence. In areas of armed conflict the 'cycle of violence' can be interrupted by using conflict resolution techniques, which provide alternatives to the use of violence. The use of the military as the primary intervention tool creates an impression that military, armed actors and the threat of violence are 'normal' (rather than only one option) and does nothing to challenge militarism in society.

Within hierarchical military structures there is a lack of capacity for local ownership and engagement. Military decision-making and planning are hierarchical¹³ and follow set patterns, which makes it difficult for contextual design of interventions. Remaining within a fixed structure of roles and responsibilities limits the ability of military peacekeepers to fully engage with local people and allow local people to take ownership of protection that meets their needs. Local engagement is seen as a crucial component of successful interventions for peace¹⁴, and although military peacekeepers talk to and meet local people, there is no opportunity for genuine balanced partnership and collaboration. The often high turnover of military personnel also hampers the creation of trusting relationships (and one person carrying a weapon doesn't make it an equal relationship), which is crucial for long term sustainable peacebuilding and successful peacekeeping¹⁵.

The military dominance in peacekeeping leads to inadequate gender equality and influence of women. Most peacekeeping soldiers are men¹⁶, as are their commanders and the people who run peacekeeping missions. There is therefore an under-representation of women in peacekeeping missions and, given that the UN has recognised women as important to creating peace¹⁷, it is a gap that affects the ability of the peacekeepers to impact positively on conflict. There have also been abuses towards women that have affected the trust and credibility of military peacekeepers¹⁸. A more diverse approach to peacekeeping could be achieved by reducing the dominance of the military in providing peacekeepers and commanding missions.

UCP and using civilians to undertake peacekeeping tasks is an approach that overcomes some of these limitations. UCP is a new addition to the international toolbox for tackling violent conflict and demonstrates an intervention strategy aimed at preventing violence and protecting civilians involving peacekeeping tasks¹⁹ that link to long-term peacebuilding²⁰. UCP, which will be explored in more detail below, provides the opportunity to create a new range of peacekeeping methods, even if it also comes with limitations (also explored below).

What is Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping?

¹³ibid

¹⁴ S. Autesserre, "Going Micro: Emerging and Future Peacekeeping Research." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 21 no. 4 (2014) pp492-500; S. Autessere. *Peaceland. Conflict resolution & the everyday politics of international. intervention.* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2014); E. Furnari, H. Oldenhuis, and R. Julian, "Securing Space for Local Peacebuilding Peace building," *Peacebuilding* Vol. 3 no. 3 (2015) pp297-313; R. Mac Ginty, and O. Richmond, "The Local turn in Peacebuilding: a critical agenda for peace." *Third World Quarterly*. Vol 34, 2013.pp763-783.

¹⁵ Furnari op.cit.

¹⁶ Francesco Bertolazzi *Women with a Blue Helmet: The Integration of Women and Gender Issues in UN Peacekeeping Missions.* (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), (2010)

¹⁷ UNSC. Resolution 1325 (31 October 2000) UN Document (S/RES/1325)

¹⁸ Whitworth op.cit.

¹⁹ Rachel Julian & Russell Gasser "Soldiers, Civilians and Peacekeeping – Evidence and False Assumptions", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 26:1, (2019) pp 22-54

²⁰ Oldenhuis et al *Strengthening Civilian Capacities to Protect Civilians*, UNITAR, 2015
available:<https://www.unitar.org/event/strenghtening-civilian-capacities-protect-civilians-ptp201522e>
(accessed December 12th 2018)

Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP) describes an approach, methodology and set of activities in which trained civilians protect other civilians from direct and immediate violence, using methods developed from nonviolence theory and practice.

Unarmed civilian peacekeepers are national and international staff from every continent who carry out unarmed civilian peacekeeping, who live and work in the affected communities with the people they are protecting from direct and immediate violence. They have daily contact with people (shopping, walking, eating and meetings) so they quickly learn about existing community mechanisms for resolving conflicts and de-escalating violence. They work through being present and building a wide network of contacts from all sides in the conflict, including international contacts, government, other NGOs, commanders in armed groups, community contacts and media. They become visible and known to all actors (armed, civilian, government, informal, business, etc) so they are aware of changing levels of tension, movements or emerging triggers for violence, as well as opportunities for intervention. Their presence and visibility enable them to provide safe spaces to meet those involved in, and affected by, the conflict and violence, create communication routes or quickly respond to escalating tension with pro-active presence and patrolling. They work with community leaders or commanders of armed groups to directly stop the threats of violence. The purpose of UCP is to reduce and halt the violence, not to resolve the conflict, so they are very specifically focused on security and safety.

Several nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) have been using UCP across the world²¹ for over 35 years. The two largest INGOs, Nonviolent Peaceforce and Peace Brigades International explain:

“We protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies. We build peace side by side with local communities. We advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity.”²²

“PBI envisions a world in which people address conflicts non violently, where human rights are universally upheld and social justice and intercultural respect have become a reality. PBI works to open a space for peace in which conflicts can be dealt with non-violently. We use a strategy of international presence and concern that supports local initiatives and contributes to developing a culture of peace and justice. We act on request of local non-violent groups working for human rights and social change in regions where there is oppression and conflict.”²³

The core principles of UCP are that it is nonviolent and nonpartisan and begins with the ‘primacy of the local’²⁴. Nonviolence means that no staff member carries, or relies on, guns or other weapons to protect themselves or other people, nor to carry out any aspect of their work. Nonviolence is also the underlying principle through which projects are designed and from which methods or approaches are selected. This relationship with nonviolence is explored more fully below.

Nonpartisanship is manifest through the focus on reducing threats and violence towards civilians from any armed actor, and not seeking to impose solutions to the conflicts. Impartiality is key to all peacekeeping²⁵- the prevention of violence rather than re-balancing of power. This is one of the principles which distinguishes peacekeeping from peace enforcement.

²¹ R. Julian, and C. Schweitzer. Op.cit.8

²² Nonviolent Peaceforce, “Our Mission” *Nonviolent Peaceforce* (n.d.) website available: <https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/about/our-mission> (accessed on July 28th 2019)

²³ PBI, “The start of the PBI vision and mission” *PBI* (n.d.) available: <<https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/about-pbi/vision-and-mission>> (accessed on July 28th 2019)

²⁴ Oldenhuis et al. *Strengthening Civilian Capacities to Protect Civilians*, op.cit.

²⁵ UN DPKO (n.d.) “Principles of Peacekeeping.” *UN* (n.d.) available: <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/principles-of-peacekeeping>> (accessed on July 28th 2019)

Primacy of the local works along the same principles as 'local ownership' in peacebuilding²⁶. It is an approach to protection and prevention of violence that assumes effective and sustainable protection requires the participation, and recognition of the capacity, of the local community who are experiencing the armed conflict. In UCP this means being closely connected to the affected community, spending time designing the projects for the specific contexts and types of threat, and taking a collaborative approach to the implementation of projects working to reduce violence and build sustainable peace. Local people are not necessarily using nonviolent approaches, but as a nonviolent intervention approach, UCP begins with the capacities, lives and experiences of local people.

Whilst UCP has so far been carried out primarily through specialist NGOs, there have been some examples of unarmed military missions²⁷ and intergovernmental organisations (e.g. OSCE²⁸) using similar methods. In this paper we are primarily concerned with the work of the NGOs and the core principles and aims of their work.

To determine how core principles relate to the way UCP works, Furnari and Julian undertook a meta-analysis of three Nonviolent Peaceforce evaluations, and summarised the impact in relation to principles as,

“...there is significant evidence that UCP projects impact the safety of civilians and the capacity for civilians to be politically active, or even engage in everyday activities that might be risky otherwise. Thus another set of lessons regards the efficacy of nonviolent intervention. Repeatedly evaluations and our own research suggest that the principle of being nonviolent is key to developing relationships, understanding the context, and even UCPs own safety. Being actively nonpartisan, that is acting in ways that are clearly not aligned with one armed group or the other, but which is aligned with civilian protection, is frequently mentioned as another essential component of effectiveness. A third frequently mentioned practice which was seen to contribute to both immediate effects and long term impacts, is the primacy of local actors.”²⁹

The limitations of UCP include that it takes a long time to become established and effective³⁰ (although evidence from Kachin in Myanmar indicates this is not always true, and it can be effective within months of people being trained³¹), and that there is not yet a standing trained group of people ready for deployment. There has been some exploration of the impact of teams being dependent on 'white privilege' if they mainly come from North America and Western Europe³², however teams in South Sudan and Philippines are made up of local and international staff from across the whole world so the relationship between effectiveness and nationality of staff requires further investigation.

²⁶ T. Paffenholz, "International Peacebuilding Goes Local: Analysing Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory and its Ambivalent Encounter with 20 years of Practice" *Peacebuilding*, Vol.2, No.1, (2014) pp11-27; H. Reich, "'Local Ownership' in Conflict Transformation Projects: Partnership, Participation or Patronage?" Berghof Occasional Paper 27. (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Conflict Management, 2006.)

²⁷ R. Gehrman, M. Grant, and S. Rose. "Australian Unarmed Peacekeepers on Bougainville, 1997-20003." *Peace Review*. Vol. 27, No. 1, (2015), pp 52-60

²⁸ Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Conflict Prevention and Resolution.", OSCE (n.d.), available: <https://www.osce.org/mission-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina/conflict-prevention-and-resolution> (accessed on

²⁹ E. Furnari and R. Julian, "Comparative Study of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping: Contexts, Processes and Impacts." Paper presented at *International Peace Research Association*. Istanbul, 2014.

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ From the authors personal field notes from 'Raising Silent Voices' research project, Myanmar. 2017

³² P. Coy, "Protective Accompaniment: How Peace Brigades International Secures Political Space and Human Rights Nonviolently." In V.K. Kool (ed.). *Nonviolence: Social and Psychological Issues*, (Latham, MD: University Press of America, 1993). pp. 235-244; P. Coy, *Protecting Human Rights: The Dynamics of International Nonviolent Accompaniment by Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka*, (UMI Dissertation Services, 1997)

There have been increasing attacks on humanitarian staff in areas of violent conflict, but unarmed humanitarian convoys and missions are not trained in unarmed civilian protection, and although they follow security procedures, they are primarily delivering humanitarian aid and working 'in' a conflict, whereas UCP is a focused activity 'on' conflict and directly addresses the threats of violence. UCP is not subject to the same risks of being targeted by armed actors as unarmed humanitarian actors working 'in' conflict because the conflict and context analysis done by unarmed civilian peacekeepers is different. UCP analysis enables a design for an intervention that builds relationships with armed actors to create the protective space for civilians. UCP does not deliver aid or other material goods. In UCP there is a clear distinction between delivering material aid and providing protection from direct and immediate violence.

UCP is subject to the same limitations as all peacekeeping, which is that the actors in the conflict must be prepared to change their behaviour according to some agreement or generate a change in the conflict trajectories. For all peacekeeping, armed actors need to agree not to harm peacekeepers so that peacekeepers can protect others. If armed military peacekeepers must use weapons to force armed actors to change their behaviour then it is 'peace enforcement', which is not something that UCP can achieve. Both armed and unarmed peacekeepers can demonstrate that their presence and their actions have changed the behaviour of armed actors, saved lives and made people feel safer.

Nonviolence is sometimes studied as 'not normal', or 'the alternative', in this case positioning UCP as an alternative to armed military peacekeeping. This can give the impression that one form of peacekeeping is favoured, or stronger, than the other, but because they are based on different principles, they can have different impacts. Whilst there are places where unarmed actors may be subject to attacks, research (and anecdotal evidence from South Sudan) shows that carrying a weapon can also attract violent attack and make a peacekeeper less secure, therefore further research is needed into how different peacekeeping approaches work in different contexts.

The tasks that unarmed civilian peacekeepers do in their protection work are core peacekeeping tasks that are also done by UN armed peacekeepers³³, but the principles upon which they are carried out are different. Notably whilst UN armed military peacekeeping assumes that threat of violence is necessary when working to prevent and reduce violence³⁴ (a view consistent with militarism and 'peace through war'), Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping works from the basis of nonviolence being its core principle.

The evidence of UCP being effective and the link with nonviolence

Nonviolent strategies and approaches are a component of building peace. This applies to long-term sustainable peace (dialogue, education, and inclusion)³⁵, and to short-term reduction in direct violence (negative peace). I will illustrate how examples of UCP link to core components of nonviolence theory, therefore explaining how UCP has the potential to transform conflict and protection by applying nonviolence to both short and long term components of peace.

This paper draws on the work of Nagler and Deming³⁶ to explore how principled nonviolence theory connects to the methods and approaches of UCP. Nagler's point that 'We are not against

³³ Rachel Julian & Russell Gasser op. cit.

³⁴ Wallace op.cit.

³⁵ Quaker Council for European Affairs, "*Building Peace Together: a practical resource*" (Brussels: QCEA, 2018); John Paul Lederach op.cit.

³⁶ Michael Nagler, "Six Principles of Nonviolence", *Open Democracy* (27th July 2017) available: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/six-principles-of-nonviolence/> (accessed July 28th 2019) ; B.Deming, *On Revolution and Equilibrium* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971); CPT, "*Gandhi's Principles of Nonviolence*", available: <<https://www.cpt.org/files/PW%20-%20Principles%20-%20Gandhi.pdf>> (accessed on July 28th 2019)

other people, only what they are doing'³⁷ explains how UCP understands the relationship between the behaviour of committing violent acts and the valuing the humanity of each person. Barbara Deming uses the metaphor of hands to demonstrate the tension which exists in differentiating between the behaviour and the people themselves.

"With one hand we say to one who is angry, or to an oppressor, or to an unjust system, 'Stop what you are doing. I refuse to honor the role you are choosing to play. I refuse to obey you. I refuse to cooperate with your demands. I refuse to build the walls and the bombs. I refuse to pay for the guns. With this hand I will even interfere with the wrong you are doing. I want to disrupt the easy pattern of your life.' But then the advocate of nonviolence raises the other hand. It is raised out-stretched – maybe with love and sympathy, maybe not – but always outstretched... With this hand we say, 'I won't let go of you or cast you out of the human race. I have faith that you can make a better choice than you are making now, and I'll be here when you are ready. Like it or not, we are part of one another.'"³⁸

This helps us to understand some of the power of nonviolence in relation to violence. By framing the behaviour separately to the people who commit it, space is provided for individual behavioural change, and allows for the complexity that perpetrators of violence may also be victims of violence, and change is possible.

Evidence comes from the 35 years of modern UCP projects across the world; the evaluations, reports, research and case studies all indicate that the presence and work of unarmed civilians, with their focus on reducing violence, engaging local people and developing effective early warning-early response processes, can work and can provide a different approach than the military approaches currently prioritised.³⁹ The evidence that UCP works is summarised in the following sections. It is important to realise that the strategies, mechanisms and underlying approaches are all interconnected and reinforce one another.

Lives of civilians are saved by using UCP in armed conflicts. UCP projects in Colombia, Sri Lanka, Mindanao, South Sudan and Guatemala⁴⁰ have all saved lives through direct accompaniment and presence and have prevented violence that would have led to an increase in casualties. Examples include armed actors deciding not to carry out death threats (Colombia), armed actors allowing UCP to have access to their areas for monitoring (Sri Lanka and South Sudan), and unarmed civilians convincing armed actors to remain in, or return to, their barracks (Mindanao). In the current peace agreement in Mindanao, UCP has made an impact towards maintaining the most current ceasefire, and some armed actors agree that UCP has changed their actions and attitudes⁴¹.

³⁷ Nagler, op.cit.

³⁸ Deming op.cit.

³⁹ Summarised evidence presented on May 24th 2018 at the UN in New York when the Australian and Uruguay Permanent Missions to the UN hosted a meeting on 'Unarmed Civilian Protection'.

⁴⁰ E. Furnari, *The Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka Impacts, Learning and Summary Paper August 2003 to December 2005*. Internal Report. (Sri Lanka: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2006); PBI, "PBI Colombia 15 years Accompanying. Human rights Defenders." *Peace Brigades International* (October 2009), available < https://issuu.com/pbicolombia/docs/0910_boletin_no_12_ingles> (accessed December 4th 2016); Mahony and Eguren op.cit. ; C. Schweitzer, *Nine Years of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka*. (Brussels: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2012); C. Reiman, *Nonviolent Peaceforce Evaluation of NP's Project in Mindanao, Philippines*. (Switzerland: Swisspeace, 2010); Furnari, Oldenhuis, and Julian, op.cit. ; Nonviolent Peaceforce. *Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines: 2012 Year-end Review*." (Brussels: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2012); T. Easthom, "The South Sudan Weapons Free Zone." *Peace Review* Vol 27: 1 (2015) pp31-36.

⁴¹ Data collected from current USIP funded research title: 'Impact of civilians monitoring the Philippines Framework and Comprehensive agreements.' 2019-2020.

The strategies of accompaniment and presence⁴² are activities and mechanisms which emerge from the nonviolent principles that underpin UCP. By believing that people make choices about harming others, that people are more than the violence they threaten to carry out, and that armed actors can choose to change their behaviour UCP creates space for nonviolent solutions to emerge. People, even armed actors, are deterred from carrying out morally unacceptable actions (like killing civilians) when they are being watched.⁴³ This deterrence explains why UCP can save lives by witnessing and being present when there is risk of harm to civilians from armed actors. Being visible and intentionally watching them, the armed actors re-evaluate their outcomes of their actions and the risk that they will be held accountable for the harm they cause, and this leads to changes in their behaviour. UCP combines the use of visible presence, relationship building, and supporting local people in order to ensure armed actors reduce and desist from the violence they were going to use towards civilians.⁴⁴ By employing the principle of 'primacy of the local', UCP ensures people are included in protection mechanisms because they are recognised as equal human beings in the situation and therefore provide a valuable contribution.

The impact is that UCP has challenged the widely held belief that armed actors will only change their behaviour using the threat of weapons. The nonviolent concept that 'humans are more than the violence they commit' is a component of making UCP work, and alongside this is the principle that 'we have more in common than that which divides us'. These work together because they demonstrate that those involved in a conflict can recognise they have a shared humanity. This recognition of shared humanity is one of the influences that is used to change the behaviour of armed actors without the use of force. Nonviolence calls on all actors in a conflict to recognise both the differences between them, and the shared unity we have with others. When unarmed civilian peacekeepers bear witness to the activities of armed actors, they are challenging them to act in accordance with the nonviolent principle that we all human and have equal worth.

Communities are able to stay at home rather than be displaced through armed conflict. The reasons for displacement are usually complex. Nonviolence contributes by providing a nonviolent understanding of knowledge which is that within each of the different perspectives about the displacement there is some 'truth' and 'un-truth'. This means that in seeking to prevent displacement of communities by armed actors, UCP does not seek to determine an external objective truth about a situation, nor assume there is a single solution, but rather seeks knowledge collected through listening to experiences, story and narrative⁴⁵ and that solutions may be contained therein. Examples of preventing displacement include Sri Lanka where the UCP activities of; building of relationships with armed actors and those targeted by the violence; creating new communication routes between protagonists; and offering alternative solutions, changed the conflict dynamics and prevented the burning of houses and shops⁴⁶. In Mindanao, Philippines, where UCP teams stepped in to investigate reports of armed actors' movement that threatened a village, their clear and visible presence, established communication with the armed groups, and pre-agreed protection for civilians, negotiated a halt in movements that protected the village⁴⁷.

⁴² C. Schweitzer, (Ed.) *Civilian Peacekeeping – A Barely Tapped Resource: Arbeitspapier Nr. 23*. (Hamburg: Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, 2010); Wallace, op.cit.

⁴³ Mahony and Eguren op.cit.

⁴⁴ Easthom op.cit.; Reiman op.cit.; C. Gunduz, and R. Torralba, *Evaluation of Nonviolent Peaceforce's Project with the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao* (Brussels: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2014); PBI 2009 op.cit.; PBI Colombia "PBI Colombia." *PBI Website* (2017), available: <https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/pbi-Colombia> (accessed October 18th 2017); Nonviolent Peaceforce 2012 op.cit.; Mahony and Eguren op.cit.; Wallis, Tim (2010) Best Practice in Nonviolent Peacekeeping in C. Schweitzer (Ed.) (2010) op.cit.; T. Wallis, "Saving Lives, Saving Souls." *Peace Review* Vol. 27, No 1, (2015), pp 37-42.

⁴⁵ R. Julian, B. Bliesemann de Guevara, and R. Redhead, (2019) "From Expert to Experiential Knowledge: Exploring the Inclusion of Local Experiences in Understanding Violence in Conflict." *Peacebuilding*. Vol. 7. No.2 (2019) pp210-225.

⁴⁶ Furnari, 2006 op.cit.

⁴⁷ Reiman op.cit

Geographical peace zones where the inhabitants refuse to carry weapons or fight have helped to prevent displacements in many countries including South Sudan where a weapons-free zone was negotiated⁴⁸, and in Colombia where peace zones were created and have been protecting residents for many decades⁴⁹. In the context of holding armed actors to account to the agreements they have made to reduce harm to civilians, UCP can harness the most appropriate responses. UCP acknowledges there are both locally determined and generated responses which are interlinked with national and international policy decisions, but there is no 'blueprint' that can be applied to any context.

*Through UCP, peace and human rights work is more possible, involves more people and can operate in a wider area.*⁵⁰ Creating the space for peace and human rights work to flourish and grow is part of a nonviolent vision and response to violent conflict because, as Gandhi⁵¹ argued, means must be consistent with ends if you want to build long term peace. By making it more possible for peace and human rights work to happen, and grow, using nonviolent civilian activities, UCP is demonstrating that it is possible to use nonviolent means to achieve a peaceful future. The focused and visible accompaniment by Peace Brigades International (PBI) of peace and human rights defenders who receive death threats is a way in which UCP enables them to be protected from violence. None of the human rights defenders protected by PBI in Colombia have been killed whilst being accompanied, which means they are able to continue to carry out their tasks of supporting those who are targeted, continue to travel for their work and reach distant areas, demonstrate that unarmed protection is possible, and increase the likelihood that others will feel safe enough to undertake peace and human rights work.

If peace is the objective then the peaceful means of achieving must include modelling peaceful relationships, trust, local capacity enhancement and nonviolent conflict resolution. UCP staff live and work in affected communities, and through daily presence and communication, they support the re-establishment of relationships and communication across the divided communities.⁵² UCP enables those who want peace to work more safely and with more people in their communities. For example, UCP can ensure it is safe for them to visit UCP centres to make reports or do training, UCP can provide presence and offer a safe space for peace meetings or provide direct protection for community leaders to attend meetings that will help rebuild peace. The affected communities are deeply divided by armed conflict and UCP is effective in divided societies because the nonviolence principles that underpin UCP challenge the 'othering' which deepens and maintains the divisions. As a consequence of modelling peaceful means to achieve peaceful ends, UCP offers an alternative to the 'us and them' thinking of violent conflict, to reduce othering and encourage thinking of 'we', as small steps to overcoming divisions.

*UCP demonstrates that violence and threats of violence can be tackled by unarmed trained civilians.*⁵³ Although peaceful and nonviolent responses by civilians to the violence of armed

⁴⁸ Easthom op.cit

⁴⁹ PBI Colombia op.cit.

⁵⁰ Mahony and Eguren op.cit.; PBI Colombia op.cit.; PBI 2009 op.cit.; J.Lindsay-Poland and M. Weintraub, "To Be By Your Side: Unarmed Protection and Accompaniment in Colombia" in E. Furnari, *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence*. (Hamburg:Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, 2016); C. Schweitzer and H.Clark. *Balkan Peace Team – International e.V. A final internal assessment of its functioning and activities*. (Minden:Balkan Peace Team/Bund für Soziale Verteidigung, 2002); Gunduz, & Torralba, op.cit.

⁵¹ CPT op.cit.

⁵² Furnari 2006 op.cit., Furnari and Julian op.cit., Furnari et al 2015 op.cit., Lindsay-Poland op. cit.; E. McCarthy and J. Pickney. "Unarmed Civilian Protection in the Israeli and Palestinian Conflict." in Furnari, *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence*, op. cit.; Reiman op.cit.; Gunduz and Torralba op.cit.; C. Schweitzer 2012 op.cit.

⁵³ G. Engelbrecht and V. Kaushik, "Community-based Protection Mechanisms". *Peace Review* Vol 27. No.1 (2015) pp43-51; Mahony and Eguren op.cit., PBI 2009 op.cit.; PBI Colombia op.cit.; Lindsay and Poland op. cit.; Schweitzer and Clark op.cit.; Furnari et al 2015 op.cit.; Easthom op.cit.; Reiman op.cit.; Gunduz and Torralba op.cit.; Schweitzer op.cit.; Nonviolent Peaceforce 2012 op.cit.

conflict have been understudied in peacekeeping literature, UCP provides a framework for studying, categorising and understanding the different mechanisms through which they make an impact. Although an increase in levels of violence has often meant civilians and civilian agencies fleeing, UCP shows there are methods which enable civilians to 'lean in' and stay with the affected communities to prevent violence and protect civilians from the violence. Where there is violence, UCP shows that civilians can tackle violence in armed conflict, for example creating the weapons-free zone in South Sudan, the PBI accompaniment of human rights defenders in Colombia and the work of the International Civilian Monitoring Team in Mindanao. UCP has demonstrated that armed actors can be persuaded to change their behaviour and reduce the levels of violence and threats to civilians by the work of unarmed civilians. They have achieved this by a focus on addressing commanders of armed groups, working with them to implement a change of tactics to reduce civilian casualties, and through the direct presence on the ground, including facing weapons, and enabling the armed actors to leave without using their weapon⁵⁴.

Implications and discussion

Having provided evidence that demonstrates UCP can, and does, protect civilians, this shows that UCP can be considered a component of peacekeeping interventions where the aim includes protection of civilians, but nonviolent civilians can only be included on a larger scale if we challenge the assumption that peacekeeping must be done by the military.

Now I consider two ways in which UCP has the potential to transform our thinking in relation to protecting civilians threatened by armed conflict, and challenge the assumption that violence works in security, protection and peacekeeping.

Firstly, UCP provides evidence that nonviolence is effective in areas of security, preventing and reducing violence⁵⁵. If nonviolence is effective, it provides a very real alternative to doctrines of violence and militarism that have been embedded in International Relations and Politics. There is already evidence that nonviolence is effective in civil resistance⁵⁶, and conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes show how people are able to use nonviolent methods to resolve conflicts rather than rely on violence or threats of violence. UCP demonstrates that it is not just UN armed military peacekeeping (AMP) that is able to have an impact on security, peace, ceasefires, and human rights, but that there are a range of approaches that are available to the international community. UN AMP is one approach that has been widely employed, and is enabled through international mechanisms and funding, but we limit our impact if we expect it to work everywhere and in every situation where civilians face armed conflict.

Secondly, UCP provides a new framework for analysing security, threats of violence, and the actions of armed actors, including local actors. The underpinning of nonviolence affects the way the different actors are seen by insiders and outsiders. There is no 'enemy to be defeated', nor separate victims and perpetrators. Instead the agency of local people is the starting point for designing the protective mechanisms, and an assumption that relationships can, and will, be built up for protection to be effective. Whilst a military assessment depends on 'us and them' thinking and analysis, and threats being determined by someone from the outside, UCP uses an approach based on complexity and inclusivity. This gives a framework that is looking for relationships, connections and local capacity in order to understand the threats and actions of all actors in relation to them.

⁵⁴ E. Furnari. *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence*. (Hamburg: Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, 2016)

⁵⁵ Wallace, op.cit.

⁵⁶ E. Chenoweth and M. Stephan. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

By challenging underlying assumptions in the practice of protecting civilians, and the theoretical frameworks that inform policy, UCP has a potentially transformative impact in moving away from the dominance of militarism and recognition of nonviolence.

Conclusion

Now the 35 years of practice and evidence show that unarmed civilians provide an alternative in protection and peacekeeping that has been shown to work. UCP has overturned the assumption that armed actors will only yield to a weapon or threat of violence.

As greater knowledge is shared and understood about the role of civilians, and particularly the use of nonviolence, in protection and peacekeeping it will provide a way of bringing forward new analysis of all peacekeeping. An indicator of change, that unarmed and nonviolent strategies are recognised to the same extent as armed and military peacekeeping ones, would be that all peacekeeping research and policy work describes the type of peacekeeping work that is being carried out. This would mean tasks, principles and missions mandates could be compared.

UCP missions have been saving people's lives for many decades. Through analysis of those activities' new principles, theories, networks and credibility have been developed. There is now the possibility that evidence can be collected and used in both theory and practice to improve the contested and complex area of civilian protection. There is no agreed methodology for assessing efficacy in peacekeeping or protection of civilians, and as a complex intervention, many factors, including the context and method of peacekeeping, will influence our understanding of success. The discussion on effectiveness, success, failure and challenges includes the examination of limitations, and whilst understanding the limitations of either armed and unarmed peacekeeping is important, in future study we can also study the limitations of peacekeeping more broadly.

One of the impacts of militarisation (the opposite of pacifism) being dominant in international politics is to have marginalised UCP and principles of nonviolence⁵⁷. UCP is transformative in practice as it shows the positive impact of using nonviolence in real situations. UCP is part of the practical, evidential bridge between an argument that the military are essential in protection from violence, and a pacifist ethos of peace. UCP contributes to a global challenge to militarism, and demonstrates that principles of nonviolence, of overcoming the 'us' and 'them' of military thinking and strategising, can be achieved.

⁵⁷ R.Redhead and R. Julian, R "Peace and Human rights practice links to feminist knowledge." Presented at *International Studies Association Conference*, San Francisco, 2018